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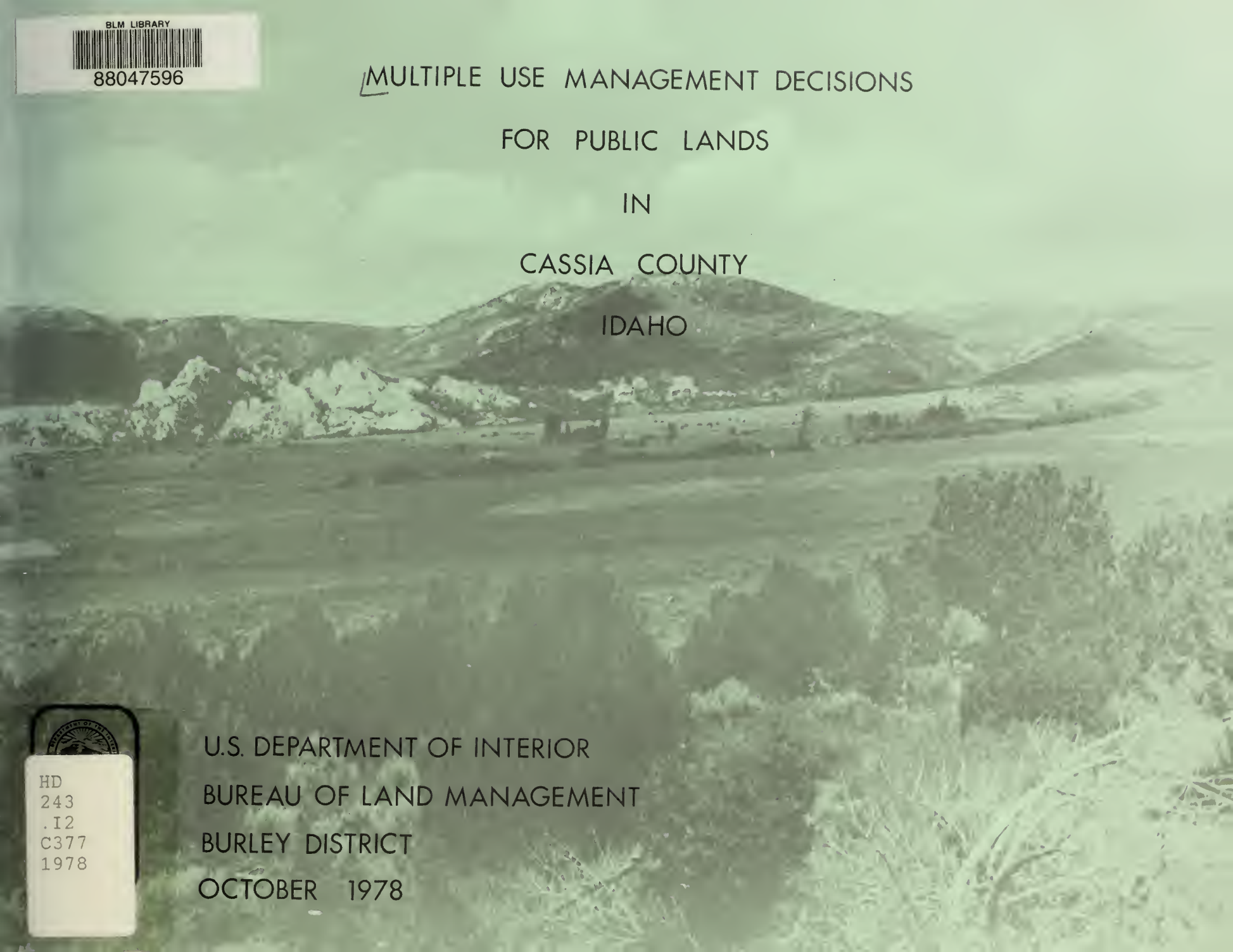
MULTIPLE USE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

FOR PUBLIC LANDS

IN

CASSIA COUNTY

IDAHO



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

BURLEY DISTRICT

OCTOBER 1978

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INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is required under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (Organic Act) to project its land uses through comprehensive mutiple use planning. With increasing demands for various uses of public lands the task of land use planning becomes more important and difficult. Proper planning enables the Bureau to make responsible decisions in allocating the uses of its resources.

The planning system used by the BLM includes an analysis of detailed resource inventories. It describes existing situations and helps the Bureau determine opportunities for managing lands, minerals, recreation, wildlife, forestry, watershed and livestock forage. "Best" management recommendations for each particular resource are then developed. This often results in overlaps or management conflicts between resources. Tentative solutions to these competing or incompatible resource uses, known as multiple use recommendations, are then made. After a thorough analysis and a number of public meetings, the District Manager adopts a Management Framework Plan (MFP) which indicates how the public lands in the unit can best be managed for multiple uses. The MFP provides general direction and guidance for all subsequent actions in the unit. Ongoing public input and participation involving all interested individuals, groups and agencies is encouraged throughout the planning process to help the Bureau decide on the best and most responsible uses of public lands.

In 1967 Burley District resource specialists began gathering resource data for the West Cassia, Cotterel and Sublett Planning Units in Cassia County. A concerted effort was launched in 1973 to complete the combined MFP for these planning units known as the Cassia County MFP.

Staff specialists recorded all available data about the various resources. Personal contacts were made and public meetings were held to obtain additional information and to help develop the resource management recommendations. After a thorough analysis, a set of multiple use recommendations were brought to the public for review. Their comments and suggestions were fully considered before the formulation of the MFP. The Cassia County MFP was completed in May, 1974.

The Cassia County MFP is summarized in this document. The complete MFP document is available for review in the Burley District Office. The MFP provides management direction and guidance, as well as a framework for future BLM actions in the unit. When those management recommendations are adopted, they will receive additional review through the procedure established by the National Environment Policy Act of 1969. It is anticipated that the MFP will be revised from time to time to meet the needs of the people and to cope with chaging local and national conditions. Major revisions will be accomplished with full public participation.

My staff and I look forward to working with you in the future to formulate and update the district land use plans. We wish to thank everyone who assisted in the completion of the Cassia County MFP, especially those who attended our public meetings.

James Lozakos

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GLOSSARY

As in most systems, BLM's planning system has its own "language". To help you understand some of the terms used in this brochure, a glossary is included for reference:

Allotment Management Plan (AMP)
A detailed plan for intensively managing and improving a specific grazing allotment.

Environmental Statement (ES)
A document analyzing the environmental impacts of proposed actions and alternative actions.

Habitat Management Plan (HMP)
A detailed plan to develop and manage a specific area for increased forage production or habitat conditions for aquatic or terrestrial wildlife.

Known Geothermal Resources Area (KGRA)
An area in which the geology, nearby discoveries, competitive interests, or other indicators in the option of the Secretary convince experts in the field that the prospects for extraction of geothermal steam or associated geothermal resources are sufficient to warrant expenditure of money for that purpose.

Management Framework Plan (MFP)
A planning decision document which establishes for a given planning area land use allocations, coordination guidelines for multiple use, and management objectives to be achieved for each class of land use or protection. It is the Bureau's land use plan and is prepared in three steps: Step One — Resource Recommendations; Step Two — Impact Analysis and Alternative Development; Step Three — Decision Making.

Off-Road Vehicle (ORV)
Any vehicle capable of, or designed for, travel on or immediately over land, water or other natural terrain; excludes registered motorboats, emergency and government vehicles.

Planning Unit
A portion of the Burley District used for assembling resource inventory data and developing land use plans. For each planning unit the District Manager prepares a Unit Resource Analysis and a Management Framework Plan.

Public Lands
Public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The BLM also manages a federal mineral estate where stewardship is limited to subsurface portions of the land.

Unit Resource Analysis (URA)
A basic source of information on the land and its resources used as one of the foundations of the MFP. It consists of resource maps, physical profile and resource inventory summaries. It also evaluates resource potential and capability of the land to fill the public's needs for lands, minerals, recreation, wildlife, watershed, forest products and range management.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Cassia County MFP Unit lies partly on a small section of the Snake River Plain and partly in the Basin and Range Province of the Upper Snake River subregion of the Columbia River drainage. The plain consists largely of a 1 to 12 mile wide belt of flat to gently rolling land. The Basin and Range Province is a group of partly deserted faultblock mountains separated by downfaulted basins.

The largest cities in the planning unit are: Burley, Declo, and Oakley. Smaller communities are: Malta, Albion, Almo, Elba, Raft River and Naf.

Main travel arteries within the planning unit are Interstate 80-N which runs from Salt Lake City, Utah, north and west across the unit; and Interstate 15-W which runs east and west in the unit and joins with Interstate 80-N in the northeast part of the planning unit.

The Cassia County Planning Unit contains 1,761,000 acres of which 494,000 acres are federally administered lands and 67,000 acres are state administered land.

For gathering information the planning area is divided into three planning units — the Sublett, West Cassia and Cotterel.

The general vegetative types include sagebrush, grasslands and some pinion junipers. Much of the grassland is crested wheat seedlings. Yearly precipitation varies from 9 inches in the low valley areas to 24 inches in the higher elevations. Elevation varies from 4,100 feet in the valley bottoms where the topography is flat or gently rolling to 8,048 feet in the mountain areas which are characterized by steep slopes and narrow canyons.

Cassia County's economy is based on agriculture and agricultural-related industries. Domestic livestock grazing, the area's primary agricultural use, involves nearly all of the public lands in the unit. Much of the public land grazing is carried out in conjunction with ranch operations based in the irrigated farming areas. Generally, livestock raised in Cassia County winter on forage grown on private farms and graze on public land and national forest land during spring, summer and fall.

Tourism plays a limited role in the economic base of the Cassia County Unit. The tourist trade is generally associated with people traveling on Interstate 80-N and Interstate 15-W. Recreational uses such as hunting and fishing on BLM-managed land also contribute to the economy of the planning unit.

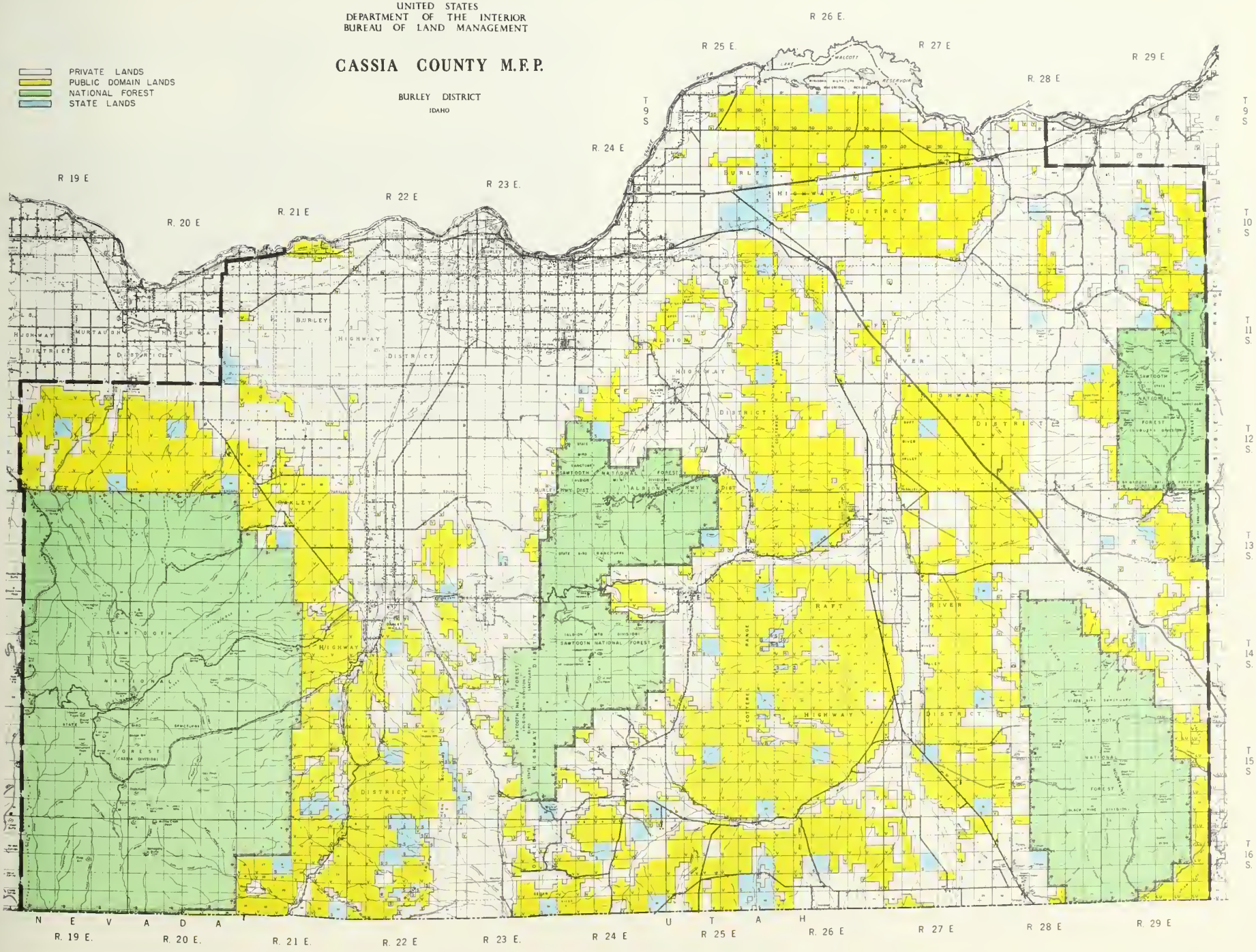
View of north end Proposed Jim Sage Natural Area.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

CASSIA COUNTY M.F.P.

BURLEY DISTRICT
IDAHO

PRIVATE LANDS
PUBLIC DOMAIN LANDS
NATIONAL FOREST
STATE LANDS



MAJOR ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

The following is a summary of significant problems and issues addressed in the Cassia County MFP Unit:

- Interstate 80-N has cut off a crucial deer migration route in the Meadow Creek—Sweetzer Summit area.

- With increased and more intensive farming, small tracts of BLM land have become more crucial as pheasant protection and production areas.

- With increased demands for agricultural land in the Cassia County area, some BLM lands have become prime targets for agricultural development.

- There is a need to resolve unauthorized agricultural developments on public land.

- There is a need to decide what agencies should manage the City of Rocks and how they should manage it.

- Unauthorized removal of sand and gravel is a problem in the MFP area.

- A determination needs to be made on the impact development of a geothermal resource in the Raft River area will have on the socio-economics and other resources in Cassia County.

- The BLM needs to develop a management plan addressing a stand of pinion pine in the Raft River area. It is the only stand of pinion pine in Idaho.

Gravel pit area now being used as an unauthorized dump.

- Procedures need to be developed for mining building stone on federal lands.

- As a result of a National Resource Defense Council suit, the BLM needs to complete a detailed range environmental statement in the unit.

- There is increased public demand for group recreation in the MFP area.

Hunter with pheasant taken from Sikes Act Tract.

Idahome gravel pits developed for waterfowl habitat area.

Pinon pine, juniper, and sagebrush tvpe stands in Almo Area.

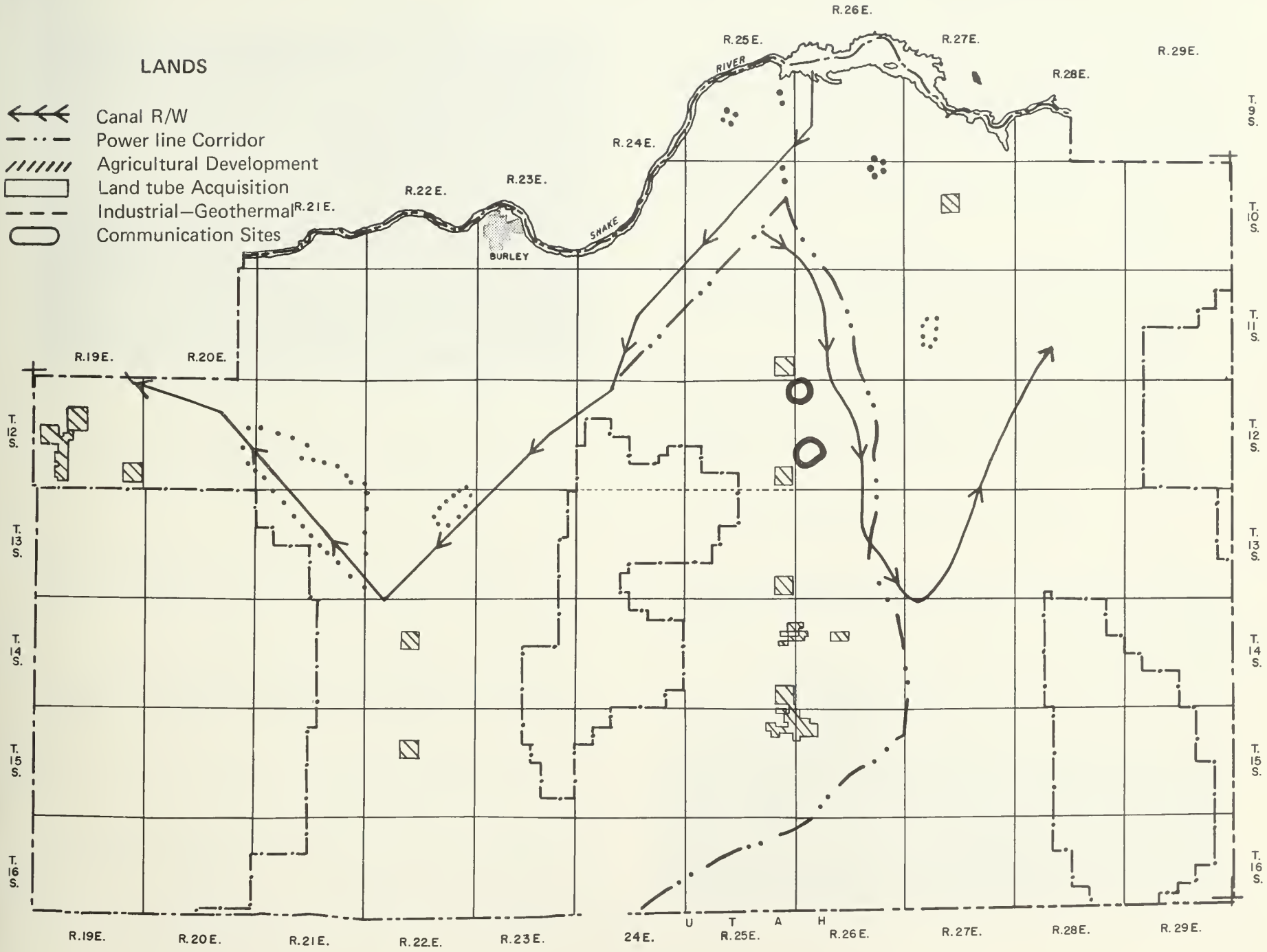
Oregon Trail as it crosses the Milner Tract.

LANDS

The major thrust of the land program will be to retain public land in the planning unit. Under the MFP, the BLM will:

- Participate with and encourage the Cassia County Zoning and Planning Commission to include BLM planning recommendations into the County Zoning Ordinance;
- Establish powerline corridors along existing powerline rights-of-way, and confine future lines to these corridors;
- Make available parcels of land to communities for residential or commercial uses as needed;
- Make available identified tracts for agricultural development when water becomes available. This land should be disposed of through the Bureau of Reclamation;
- Develop plans to retain some isolated tracts for wildlife habitat;
- Develop two isolated forty-acre tracts for agricultural use by public sale or desert land entry;
- Sell or lease several tracts of land under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP) to serve local governmental bodies for various public uses;
- Where proposed Bureau of Reclamation canal projects cross public lands, make these lands available for canal right-of-ways. If land along canal project is disposed of, retain ditches and canals in the right-of-way;
- Hold five certain tracts of public land in federal ownership or use for special public purposes;
- Make lands in and around the Raft River KGRA available for geothermal resource research and development through the Department of Energy;
- Dispose tracts of land identified for disposal on a tract-by-tract basis after a complete inventory has been conducted making certain the tract has no significant public value;
- Restrict any new communication facilities for Raft River and Cotterel Range areas to the two present sites;
- Acquire identified land through exchange with private individuals and the State of Idaho.

A cooperative farm agreement located on one of the Sikes Act Isolated Tracts.


LANDS
Canal R/W
Power line Corridor
Agricultural Development
Land tube Acquisition
Industrial—Geothermal
Communication Sites
R.26E.
R.25E.
R.27E.
R.29E.
R.28E.
RIVER
R.24E.
R.23E.
R.22E.
R.21E.
SNAKE
BURLEY
R.19E.
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R.29E.

MINERALS

The MFP provides management direction for the increasing demands on mineral resources from public lands, especially sand, gravel and energy minerals. Under the MFP, the BLM will:

- Initiate a program to determine sand and gravel deposit locations;

- Allow oil, gas and geothermal leases in the unit except where they may interfere with the Department of Energy's research and development;

- Develop and carry out reclamation programs on mineral extraction sites to enhance visual impacts and possibly increase other uses such as wildlife habitat and recreational values;

- Determine which gravel sites should be designated as community pits;

Geothermal research and development in Raft River Area.

Outcrop and talus quarry of oakley stone.

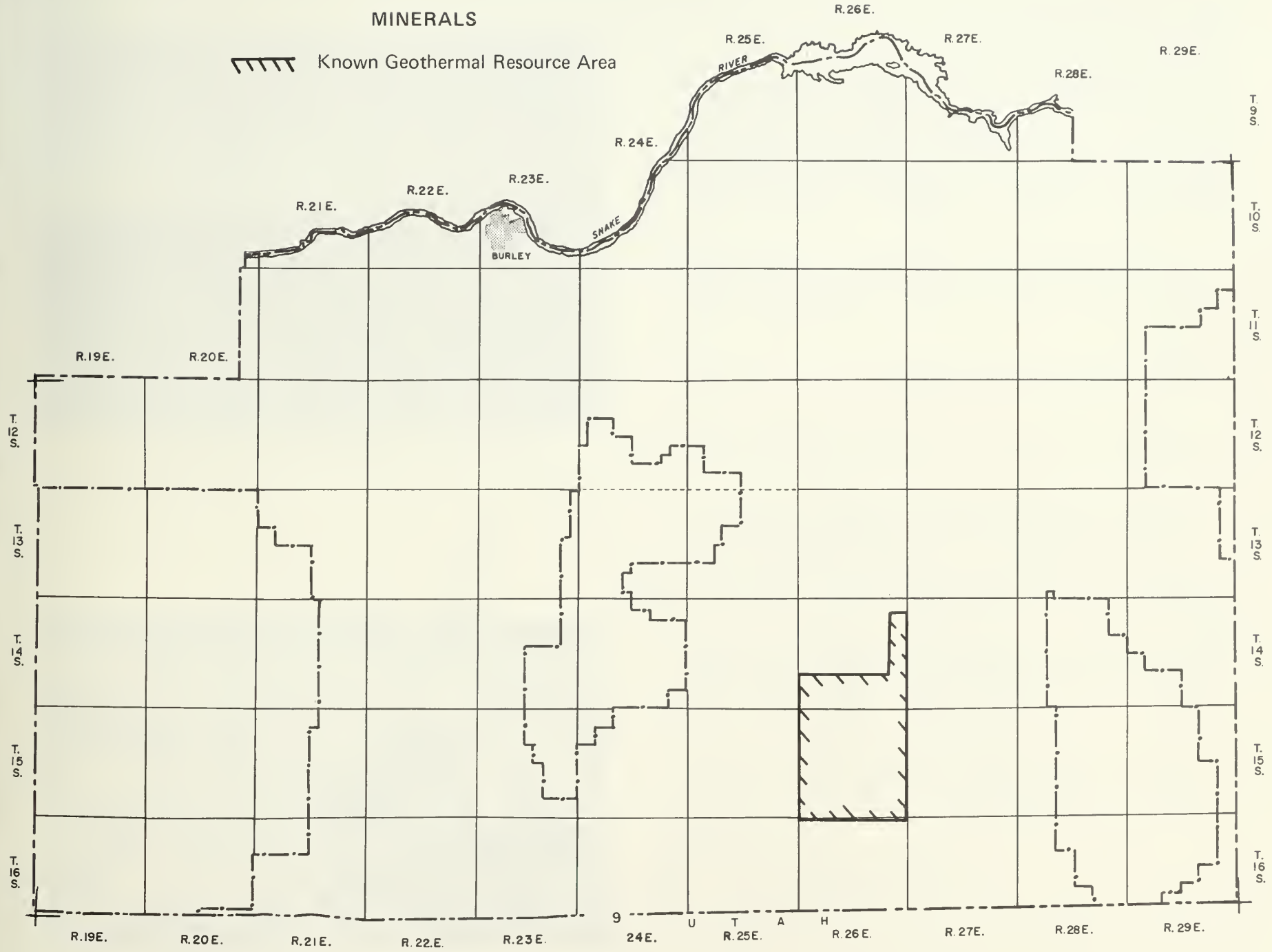
- Maintain a working relationship with the claimants in developing reclamation plans for Oakley stone areas;

- Do nothing regarding development of the minerals in the potential mineral areas since they are of small quantities and of poor quality except the prospective geothermal areas;

- Allow mineral exploration and development within critical wildlife areas only after providing protection for wildlife;

- Disallow surface disturbance for mineral extraction within the Jim Sage Natural Area.

- Allow the Department of Energy's withdrawal application for a geothermal development and research project within the Raft River KGRA.


MINERALS
Known Geothermal Resource Area
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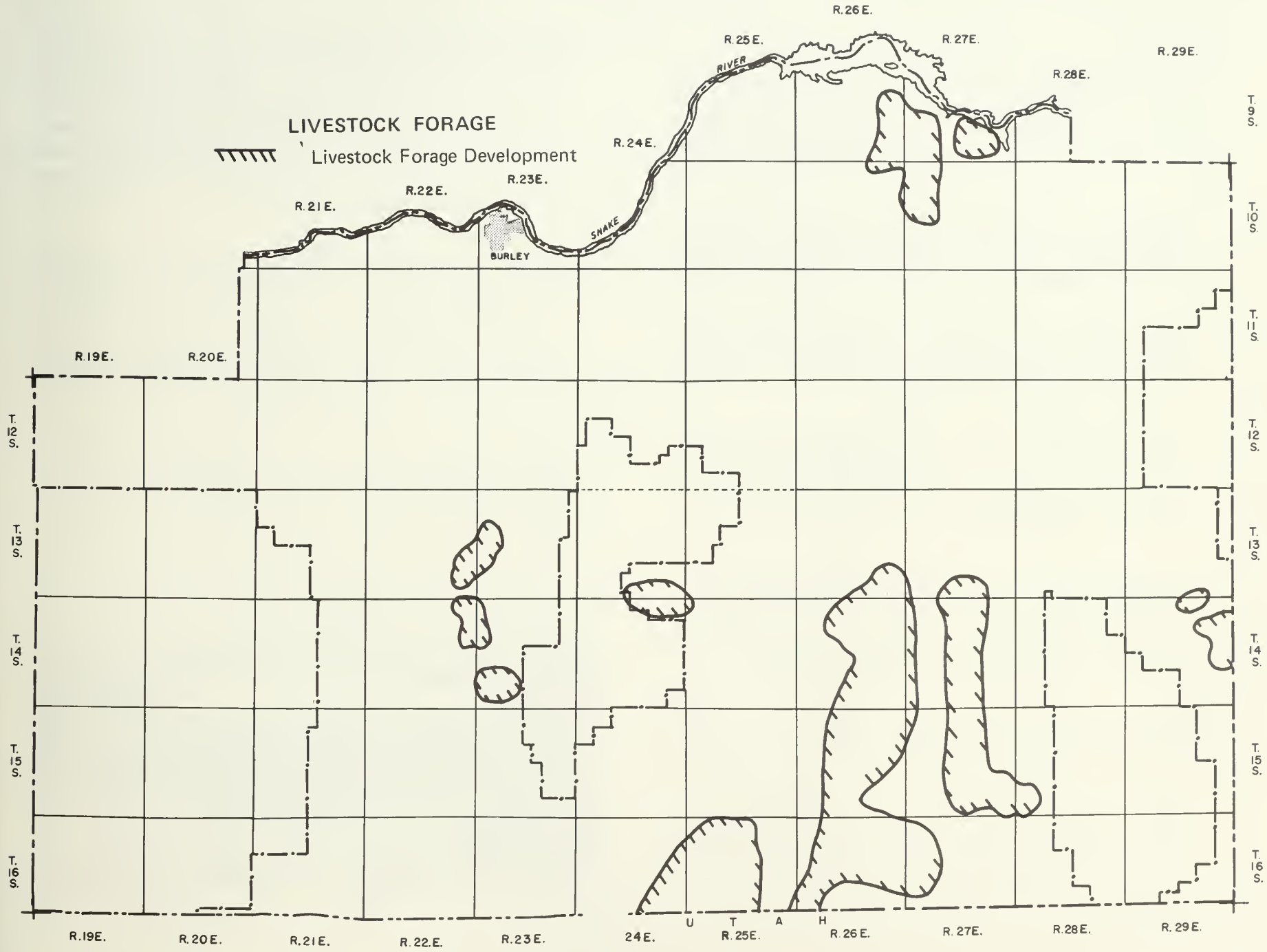
RANGE MANAGEMENT

The overall objective of the range management program is to improve the condition of the range resource, enhance environmental values and produce forage sufficient to meet demands. This objective will be accomplished through intensive grazing management as prescribed by allotment management plans (AMPs). Under the MFP, the BLM will:

- Install cattleguards on all well-traveled roads where livestock problems are encountered due to increased use of public lands;
- Maintain withdrawal stock driveways;
- Consider water needs for livestock in all water development projects;
- Acquire by exchange scattered small parcels of private and State land surrounded by public land commonly used by livestock to provide better management and control of livestock;
- Design allotment management plans to improve wildlife habitat when developing plans that include crucial wildlife areas;
- Improve identified livestock forage areas using necessary improvement restraints.

Cattle grazing on created wheatgrass in Cassia County.

Sheep grazing on public rangeland.


LIVESTOCK FORAGE
Livestock Forage Development
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WILDLIFE

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game has the basic authority to manage wildlife. The BLM's prime objective is to cooperate with the State in improving and expanding wildlife habitat on public lands. To accomplish this, the BLM, under the MFP, will:

- Conduct an intensive inventory in cooperation with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to determine the crucial areas for sagegrouse and Hungarian and chukar partridge;

- Restore and manage meadows and drainageways in poor condition which have been invaded by sagebrush to produce maximum succulent forbs and grasses;

- Inventory all land listed in the lands resources for disposal to determine if they have any wildlife values, and determine if some tracts should be retained in Federal ownership to protect the wildlife habitat;

- Give consideration to planting and protecting species such as Russian olive, willows and rosebrush on all watered areas, such as spring developments, reservoirs, seeps and livestock waters. Where possible, provide additional wet areas.

- Conduct brush control projects in accordance with the Guidelines for Habitat Protection in Sage Grouse Range;

- Maintain and/or improve mule deer winter habitat and prepare HMPs on crucial deer winter ranges. No mechanical treatment can be carried out in the winter ranges without a HMP. From December through April ORV use will be precluded;

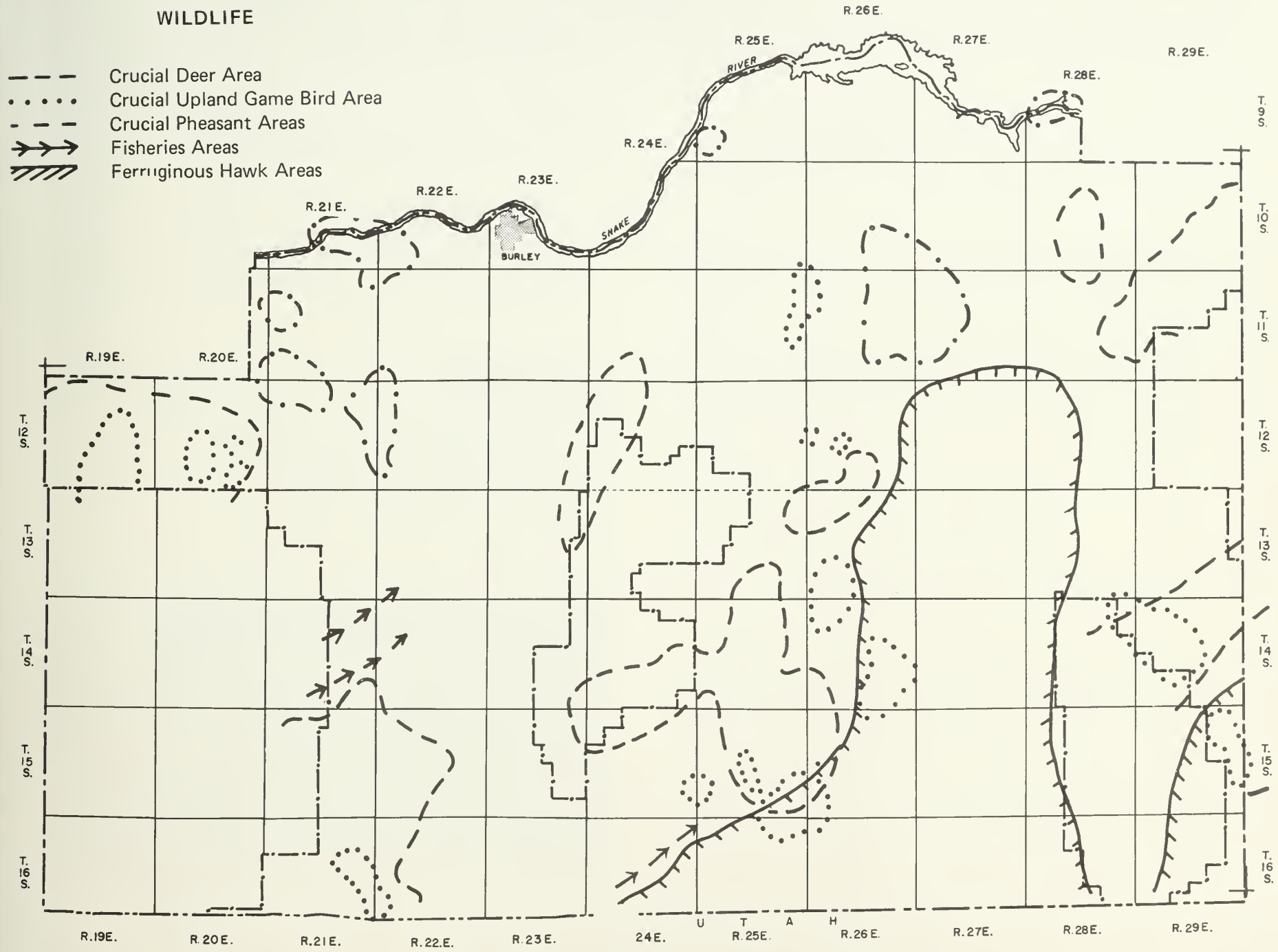
- Within the crucial deer migration routes, participate in and encourage the development of a plan to construct wing fences and underpasses in relation to the Meadow Creek and South Stone crucial deer migration routes. Acquire through exchange, if possible, those tracts extending in lands that are within the migration routes and disallow brush eradication projects within the travel routes;

- Maintain or improve the antelope habitat in the antelope management area. To do this the BLM will construct all fences within these areas to meet standards that are safe to antelope, and conduct trial seedings of dryland forbs and palatable shrubs in the existing crested cheatgrass seeding and in the greasewood and big sage sites;

- Manage crucial upland game habitat to maintain an adequate stand of sagebrush with interspersion of forbs and grasses. A HMP will be prepared on these areas. Sagebrush control project will not be done in crucial upland game habitat unless they will improve the habitat. No brush control project will

Milner Butte bird guzzlers provide water for wildlife in arid areas.

WILDLIFE


Crucial Deer Area
Crucial Upland Game Bird Area
Crucial Pheasant Areas
Fisheries Areas
Ferruginous Hawk Areas
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be carried out along streams, meadows or intermittent streams;

- Conduct an intensive inventory to locate critical sharptail, forest grouse habitat, determine the critical habitat needs, and acquire by exchange, if possible, other land within this area;

- Withdraw pheasant protection areas from entry to protect and manage them for pheasants, Hungarian partridge, rabbits, small mammals, etc. Develop a HMP for each area and survey and sign each. Improve winter and resting habitat, trees, shrubs and forbs and plant perennial grasses. Also, develop water facilities such as bird guzzlers, small reservoirs, etc., to make water available during the non-irrigation season;

- Protect any known and potential nesting sites (isolated juniper trees) in ferruginous hawk areas. In these areas brush control projects will provide patches of brush for habitat of prey species, rabbits and ground squirrels; and

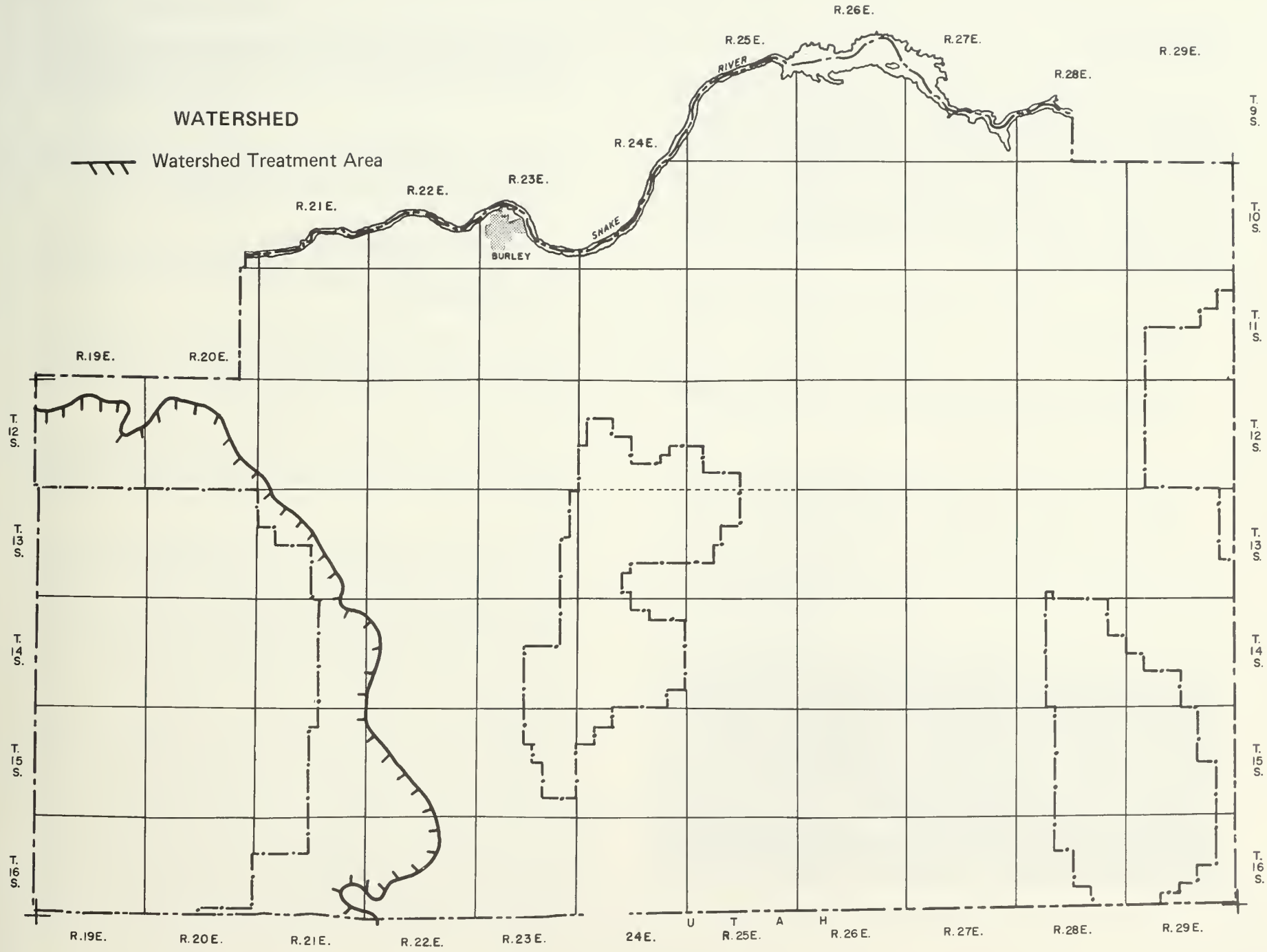
- Develop and protect waterfowl nesting habitat. This will be accomplished by fencing and protecting the existing ponds along Warm Creek and planting the shoreline with willows and other shoreline vegetation; protecting shoreline vegetation on all water impoundments by fencing them; developing the Idahome gravel pit for a waterfowl habitat area; and developing aquatic habitat studies on streams identified for fisheries, acquiring by exchange, if possible, tracts of land identified for fisheries habitat.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

The objective of the watershed program within this unit is to maintain the majority of the unit in a slight or stable erosion class. To accomplish this, the BLM, under the MFP, will:

- Develop watershed management plans that give primary consideration to the control and management of grazing and secondary consideration to vegetation and water control structures. For some areas, the watershed management plans must incorporate important wildlife and scenic values.

Rehabilitation of burn area in Cassia County.


WATERSHED
Watershed Treatment Area
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RECREATION

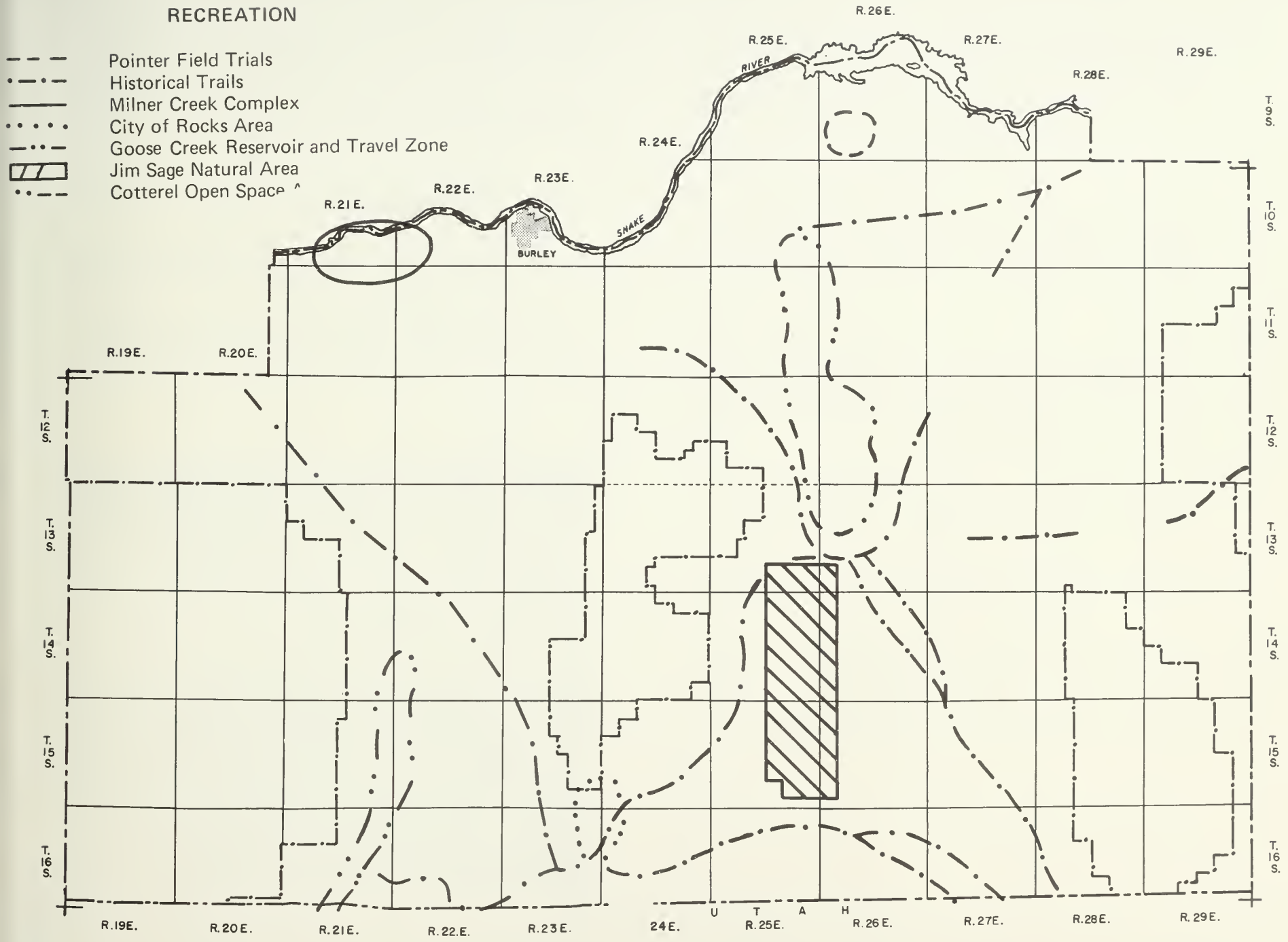
The overall objective for the recreation program is to retain lands administered by BLM in public ownership and make them available for recreational use. This is particularly true for large blocks of public lands. Natural beauty as well as historical, archaeological, geological, botanical, zoological and other resource values will be preserved. To accomplish this, the BLM, under the MFP, will:

- Develop a study which will inventory public access problems within the unit;
- Identify any health or safety hazards and implement a plan to eliminate them if possible;
- Determine the number and location of all archaeological and historical sites and establish their significance. Acquire through exchange, if possible, any sites of significant values;

Off-road vehicle use of public land in Cassia County.

- Using existing trails whenever possible, establish a system of trails in the unit for ORV use, horseback riding and hiking;
- Retain in Federal ownership small tracts of public lands identified as having important wildlife values;
- Post public land boundaries with metal signs at road and trail crossings. Maintain and/or expand the road and directional sign program;
- Retain in Federal ownership and protect all public lands within the City of Rocks until a decision is made by Congressional action as to the designation of the area;
- Determine if isolated tracts close to cities and villages can be used as motorcycle trail parks without conflict with other uses;
- Identify the historical trails on the ground and gather as much information as possible on these trails. After the trails are located, withdraw a 330 foot strip of land on each side of the trail. No mechanical treatment will be allowed except in case of fire. Reseeding will be done only with natural grasses and brush to prevent erosion from destroying the trails;
- Designate the "Jim Sage Natural Area". Within this area acquire, through exchange, State and private lands. Also, develop a management plan outlining management objectives and procedures, after an inventory of the flora and fauna has been completed. Within the Jim Sage area, withdrawals against entry under the general land laws and the mining and mineral leasing laws are illustrated on the recreation map.;

RECREATION


Pointer Field Trials
Historical Trails
Milner Creek Complex
City of Rocks Area
Goose Creek Reservoir and Travel Zone
Jim Sage Natural Area
Cotterel Open Space
R.19E.
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R.21E.
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BURLEY
SNAKE RIVER
UTAH

- Develop a comprehensive multiple-use management plan for the Milner complex including Bureau of Reclamation (Tract 14) on the north side of the river. All public land within the Milner complex should be withdrawn from entry under the general land laws and the mining and mineral leasing laws.

- In coordination with the U.S. Forest Service, Idaho Fish and Game Department and Mt. Harrison Snowmobile Club, winter sports areas will be established in the Hegler and Sublett winter areas;

- Designate Cotterel Mountain as an open space scenic area. The primitive road will be upgraded to a standard graveled 16 foot road. Overlooks with gravel parking pads will be developed along the woods;

- Maintain the use by Idaho English Pointer Field Trials in the Highway Unit Common Allotment;

- Maintain a public archery range on the tract on the east end of Milner area under R&PP lease to the city of Burley;

- Acquire, through exchange, 160 acres located in T. 14 S., R. 21 E., Section 25: E ½ NW ¼, N½ NE¼ for the development of an extensive boating site at Goose Creek Reservoir without the cooperation of the County Waterways Commission;

- Designate a scenic corridor along Goose Creek from Wilson Pass to the Idaho—Utah line.

FORESTRY

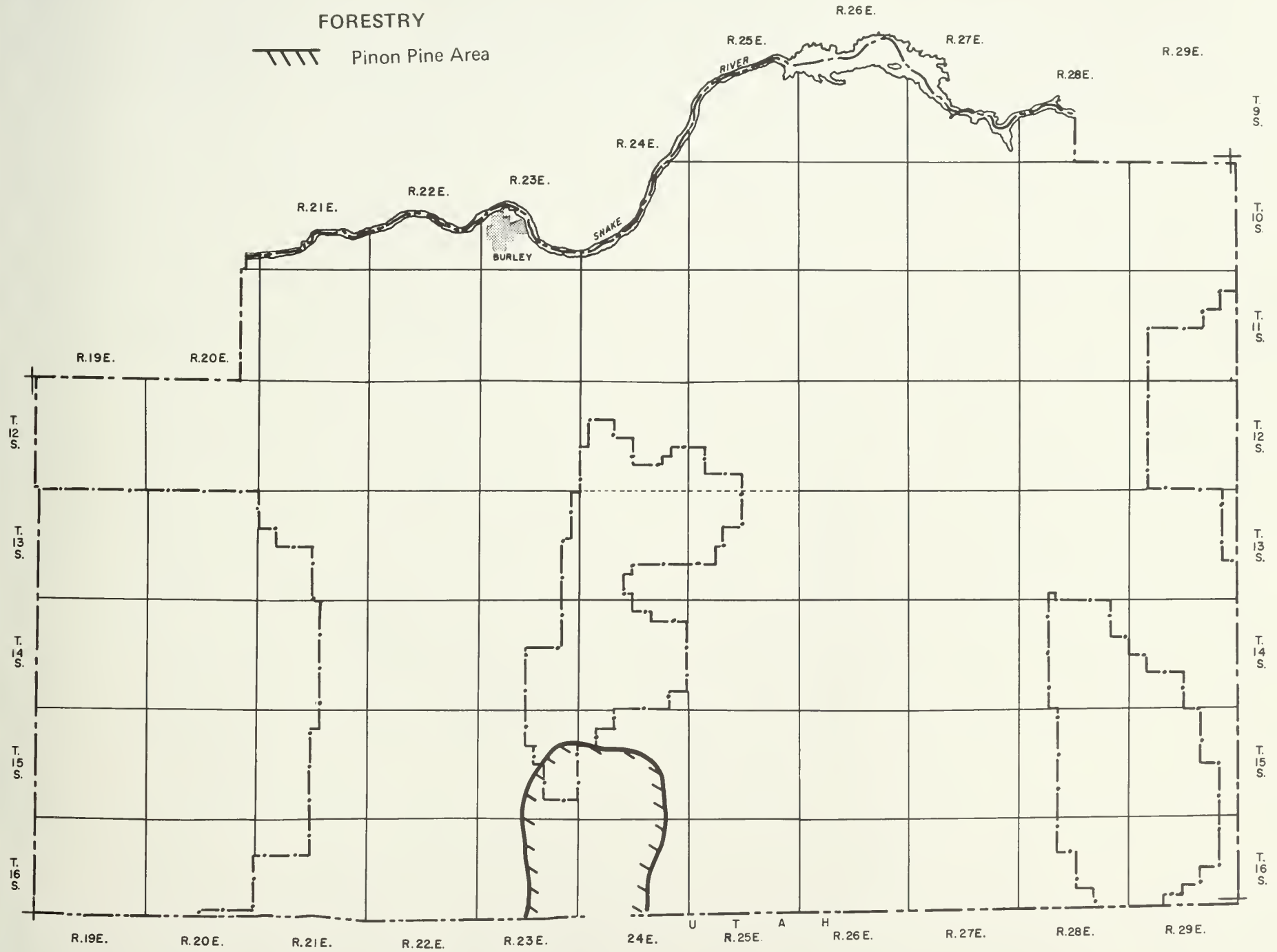
The only forestry resource found on the unit is of a woodland type; therefore, under the MFP, the BLM will:

- Direct the sale of juniper posts and Christmas trees to areas of thick juniper stands; and

- Disallow cutting in the City of Rocks, Jim Sage Natural Area and Goose Creek Travel Zone.

- Develop a management plan addressing a stand of pinion pine in the Raft River area. It is the only stand of pinion pine in Idaho.

Pinon pine stand which is only found in this part of Idaho.


FORESTRY
Pinon Pine Area
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R.25E.
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R.29E.
RIVER
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R.29E.

CUMULATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW

Certain impacts are anticipated from livestock grazing on public lands. Under most livestock management systems, competition for forage between wildlife and livestock is likely. These and other impacts will be evaluated during the development of allotment management plans and the range environmental statement.

Environmental impacts resulting from lands and realty decisions are generally beneficial. Socio-economic factors are most often affected by lands decisions. Lands decisions are designed to promote positive results where possible.

Impacts on wildlife are mostly beneficial. Improved habitat conditions and forage allocation will enhance opportunities for wildlife, but land treatment practices to improve habitat conditions will result in some adverse visual impacts to landscape viewers. Overall, these land treatments will have beneficial impacts on watershed, wildlife habitat, and range values through increases in vegetative cover and improved species compositions.

Characteristically, mineral development areas possess high resource values relative to watershed protection, wildlife and scenery. These are heavily impacted by many activities.

Social and economic benefits often result from most recreation decisions, with little or no adverse environmental impacts. Preservation of natural areas tends to generate positive aesthetic impacts, but areas so designated generally preclude programs for improving range and watershed conditions and wildlife habitat.

Heavy or concentrated off-road vehicle use will result in soil erosion and wildlife harassment. Off-road vehicle users are often attracted to the hillsides most susceptible to erosion. Environmental areas are shown in the following table.

CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL AREAS

AREA	KEY VALUES
City of Rocks	Historical, Recreational
Milner Complex	Historical, Recreational
Cassia County	
Isolated Wildlife Tracts	Wildlife, Recreational
Oregon Trail	Historical
Interstate 80N Migration Route	Wildlife
Jim Sage Natural Area	Recreational
Highway Unit	Wildlife

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INTERRELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PLANS

The Cassia County MFP was developed in coordination with several other planning efforts: County government officials were consulted with as the plan was developed and were informed of results. The U.S. Forest Service was also consulted on use of BLM lands where lands are adjacent to each other.

ACTION BEYOND THE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN

In response to changing resource conditions and management requirements, the Cassia County plan will be updated when management decisions become available. The public will have opportunities for review and input into the planning process when major revisions are made.

The MFP decisions will be used in programing and budgeting for the annual work plan. The planning documents also provide guidance for daily operations. Further direction will be developed in specific activity plans, habitat management plans and recreation management plans. These efforts will deal with specific site developments and localized problems.

The National Environmental Policy Act requires the evaluation of environmental impacts in advance of proposed actions or developments. Under agreement with the National Resource Defense Council, an environmental statement (ES) will be prepared to assess the impacts of proposed grazing management systems. A small number of the grazing allotments within the planning unit will be part of the Bannock–Oneida Range ES to be completed by 1980. The larger number will be in the Cassia County Range ES to be completed in 1983. In preparation for this effort, studies must be conducted to determine the accuracy of existing forage surveys, range suitability, rare and endangered plants and animals, potential and actual use, and range conditions. This will also require an e the impacts of those

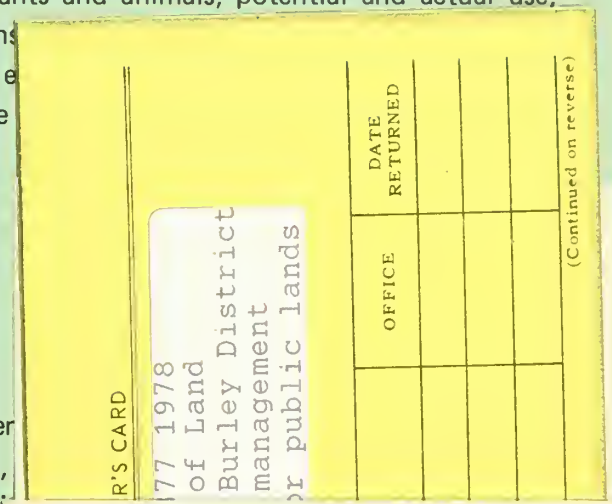
APPRECIATION

I would like to thank all persons, organizations, and governmer contributed so significantly in completing the resource inventory, land use recommendations, and assisting in the resolution of confli objectives for use of these national resource lands.

Sincerely yours,

Nick James Cozakos

Nick James Cozakos
District Manager



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